

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 L-02 PM-03 PRS-01 EUR-10 AID-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4017

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11904

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY SITREP JUNE 24-30, 1973

FOL TEL SENT ACTION IMMEDIATE SAIGON INFO USDAO SAIGON USSAG
NAKHON PHANOM FROM CAN THO DTD 2 JUL 73 RPTD TO YOU FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0520

LIMDIS

SUMMARY: DELTA COMBAT SIMMERED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, EXCEPT IN
CHUONG THIEN, WHERE ELEMENTS OF AN ARVN REGIMENT SUFFERED A
BLOODY DEFEAT. A FOUR- MAN PRG/ JMC TEAM BRIEFLY VISITED MY THO.
ICCS REGION VII INDONESIANS ARE ROTATING TO OTHER REGIONS PRIOR
TO THEIR DEPARTURE FROM VIETNAM IN LATE JULY. END SUMMARY.

1. SECURITY SITUATION: MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MR IV PERCOLATED
AT A RELATIVELY EVEN RATE THROUGHOUT THE WEEK OF JUNE 24-30.
REPORTED INCIDENTS AVERAGED ABOUT 30 DAILY. COMBAT WAS DOWN
IN EVERY PROVINCE SAVE CHUONG THIEN, WHERE THE ARVN SUSTAINED
A HEAVY DEFEAT IN HOA AN VILLAGE, LONG MY DISTRICT. THROUGHOUT
THE DELTA, THE VC CONTINUED INFILTRATIONS AND-- ALTHOUGH AT A MUCH
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REDUCED RATE SINCE CEASEFIRE II:2 MORTARINGS AND SMALL ARMS HARASSMENT OF GVN OUTPOSTS. THE RVNAF CONTINUED DEFENSIVE PATROLLING, ENTERING SUCH VC STRONGHOLDS AS TRI PHAP VILLAGE IN KIEN TUONG AND LONG MY DISTRICT, CHUONG THIEN. THESE PROBINGS FREQUENTLY INDUCED SHARP VC RESPONSES. THE GVN, SUSPICIOUS OF VC/NVA INTENTIONS DURING CEASEFIRE II, SHOWS NO WILLINGNESS TO REDUCE THESE COMBAT- INDUCING PROBES.

2. JMC/ ICCS

A. A FOUR- MAN PRG/ JMC TEAM DESCENDED SRUHELICOPTER ON MY THO DURING THE MORNING OF JUNE 27 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF SEVERAL ALLEGED GVN CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS. REGION VI GVN/ JMC CHIEF COL NGUYEN VAN LOI AND 7 TH ARVN DIVISION COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN KHOA NAM, WHO HAD RECEIVED BUT ONE DAY' S WARNING FROM SAIGON OF THE PRG' S ARRIVAL, TOLD THE PRG PARTY THAT THEY COULD NOT GUARANTEE THEIR SECURITY IN THE FIELD ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. AFTER AN ALL- NIGHT HASSLE IN MY THO' S MINH CANH HOTEL, THE PRG TEAM RETURNED TO SAIGON, MISSION UNACCOMPLISHED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY INTEND TO RETURN TO MY THO WHEN AND IF THE SECURITY SITUATION IS RESOLVED.

B. REGION VII INDONESIAN OFFICERS ARE PLANNING TO ROTATE TO OTHER ICCS REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FROM VIETNAM IN LATE JULY. THE INDONESIANS' EFFECTIVE G-2, COL EDDY JUDRAJAT, HAS ALREADY LEFT FOR BIEN HOA. THE INDONESIANS WANT THEIR OFFICERS TO SEE THE COUNTRY BEFORE THEY ARE REPLACED BY ANOTHER INDONESIAN TEAM IN LATE JULY. THE RESULT IS THAT REGION VII IS BEING STRIPPED OF ITS KNOWLEDGEABLE INDONESIANS JUST AS THE CANADIANS ARE PREPARING TO DEPART THE COUNTRY, LEAVING THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS WITH THE EDGE IN PURPOSE AND EXPERIENCE.

3. SELECTED PROVINCE COMMENTS:

A. ALTHOUGH FIGHTING HAS WANED IN OTHER DELTA PROVINCES, CHUONG THIEN REMAINS THE SCENE OF HEAVY COMBAT. THE WAR IN CHUONG THIEN CONTINUES TO ABSORB ARVN MEN AND RESOURCES, WITH LITTLE BENEFICIAL RESULTS TO THE GVN. HARDLY A WEEK GOES BY WITHOUT WORD OF ANOTHER MAJOR ENGAGEMENT-- REPORTS OF ARVN DISASTERS OFTEN ARE NOT DISSEMINATED AT MR IV BRIEFINGS-- AND OF ADDITIONAL REINFORCEMENTS HURRIED INTO THE PROVINCE TO SHORE UP THE DECLINING GVN POSITION THERE (CAN THO 0447).

B. THE MOST RECENT ARVN MISHAP UNFOLDED DURING THE AFTERNOON

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OF JUNE 25 IN HOA AN VILLAGE, LONG MY DISTRICT. TROOPS OF THE 9 TH ARVN DIVISION' S 16 TH REGIMENT, INTRODUCED INTO CHUONG THIEN ONLY ON JUNE 4, WERE PUSHING SLOWLY INTO A BASE AREA OF THE VC D-1 REGIMENT. MORTAR AND SMALL ARMS FIRE HELD THEM UP TWO OR THREE DAYS ON THE BANKS OF THE CAI COA RIVER. ON THE 25 TH THE VC FELL SUDDENLY UPON THE 16 TH REGIMENT' S 3 RD BATTALION AND THE 428 TH RF BATTALION. THE RVNAF UNITS, CAUGHT BY SURPRISE AND

SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER BY THE STREAM, WERE ROUTED WITH HEAVY LOSSES OF MEN AND WEAPONS. AT LEAST 65 WERE WOUNDED AND 70 MISSING. THE NUMBER OF DEAD IS UNKNOWN, BUT THE AMERICAN PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE, SOON ON THE SCENE, SAW MANY BODIES BEING BROUGHT OUT OF THE AREA. THE 9 TH DIVISION QUICKLY BROUGHT DOWN THE 1 ST BATTALION OF THE 14 TH REGIMENT FROM DINH TUONG AS REINFORCEMENTS.

C. THE CONTINUOUS FIGHTING IN CHUONG THIEN FLOWS INEXORABLY FROM GVN LOGIC. ALTHOUGH THE VC CONTROL LARGE AMOUNTS OF THE CHUONG THIEN' S COUNTRYSIDE AND ESTIMABLE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE, THE GVN REFUSES TO CONCEDE ANY PART OF THE PROVINCE EXCEPT THE SEGMENT JUTTING INTO THE U MINH FOREST. THE NEW 21 ST ARVN DIVISION COMMANDER, BGEN LE VAN HUNG, TOLD A VICE CONSUL IN VI THANH RECENTLY THAT THE ARVN WOULD STOP PUSHING THE VC WHEN THE VC RETURN TO THE U MINH. HIS JOB, HE EXPLAINED, WAS TO EXPEL THE VC FROM GVN AREAS, AND ALL OF CHUONG THIEN BELONGED TO THE GVN. (COMMENT: BOTH SIDES FREELY VIOLATE THE CEASEFIRE IN CHUONG THIEN. THE VC HAVE GOBBLED TERRITORY AND POPULATION SINCE CEASEFIRE I, AND THE GVN CONTINUES TO PROBE LONG- HELD VC AREAS. DURING THE PAST MONTH THEY HAVE EVEN GONE INTO ZONES-- LIKE UPPER LONG MY DISTRICT-- WHICH FORMERLY 21 ST DIVISION SOURCES TOLD US HAD BEEN CONCEDED INFORMALLY TO THE OTHER SIDE (CAN THO A-72). AS LONG AS BOTH SIDES REMAIN INTRANSIGENT, CHUONG THIEN WILL CONTINUE TO CONSUME THE RESOURCES OF THE ARVN, WITH PERHAPS CONSIDERABLE LONG- TERM RISK TO THE SECURITY OF OTHER DELTA PROVINCES SHORN OF DEFENDERS SENT INTO THE CHUONG THIEN MEAT GRINDER.

D. MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI BRIEFLY VISITED TINH BIEN DISTRICT TOWN, CHAU DOC, DURING THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 28. HE SHOWED GREAT PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE DEFENSES OF THE TOWN, ORDERED NEW BARBED WIRE STRUNG, AND REORGANIZED THE TOWN INTO FIVE DEFENSIVE DISTRICTS EACH UNDER THE COMMAND OF AN OFFICER. HE APPARENTLY EXPECTS ANY FUTURE CROSS- BORDER ATTACK TO CENTER ON THE TOWN. SIGNED WISNER UNQUOTE
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